

SCAAC Meeting Minutes

(School Curriculum, Assessment, and Accountability Council)

July 17, 1998
State Board Room

SCAAC Agenda

#	Agenda Items	Presenters
1.	Meeting Minutes	Anne Keene
2.	Council Communication Plan	Robyn Oatley
3.	Dropout Rate	Scott Trimble
4.	Kentucky State Board Issues	Helen Mountjoy
5.	High Standards Accountability Models	Scott Trimble
6.	Financial Equity Issues	Kyna Koch
7.	Threshold Accountability Model	Brian Gong
8.	Governor's Approval of Council	Dr. Ed Ford
9.	Highly Skilled Educators	David Allen / Bob Lumsden
10.	Subcommittee Process and Future Work	Anne Keene
Adjournment		

1. Meeting Minutes

Anne Keene

Chairperson Anne Keene called the meeting to order at 8:45 AM and asked Jon Frederick to call the roll. The roll was called and a quorum was present. The following Council members answered the roll call:

Jamie Bowling	Gary Mielcarek	Sharon Solomon
Maxie Johnson	Roger Pankratz	Maynard Thomas
Anne Keene	Bob Sexton	Robert Young
Bonnie Lynch	Linda Sheffield	

It was noted that some Council members would be present for part of the day only. Anne Keene reviewed the Council's agenda and requested that all absent Council members receive all handout materials provided at today's meeting.

SCAAC Motion:

Bob Sexton moved approval of the July 6th and 7th minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded by Maxie Johnson and unanimous voice vote carried the motion and the minutes were approved as corrected. Dr. Jerry Lunney requested that minutes be sent to Office of Education Accountability after corrections are made. All Council members will receive corrected, approved minutes by first class mail prior to the July 30th meeting if at all possible.

2. Council Communication Plan

Robyn Oatley

The first topic of discussion was Robyn Oatley's revised "Council Communication Plan." The revised document was disseminated and the Council reviewed the revision and commented on it.

SCAAC Motion:

Bob Sexton voiced his concern about some of the language of inclusion of the public-at-large in the plan and how they might be able to address the Council or communicate with the Council in general. He subsequently moved that the document be approved with the following amendment: add the language " and public" after "professional organizations" in paragraph 4. The motion as amended was seconded by Linda Sheffield; the motion carried by a unanimous voice vote.

Robyn announced a scheduled Region 8 meeting on July 21st at 10:00 a.m. in Prestonsburg at Adams Middle School; plans for that meeting were moving forward and all Council members were invited to attend should they be available. There will also be a second meeting in Hazard at the Gorman Education Center at 2:00 p.m. on the same day.

Sharon Solomon reported on her meeting with parents since the Council's July 7th meeting and noted that attendance was excellent; she noted that there had been some discussion and concern on the complexity of the proposed School Report Card. Sharon and Robyn will report back to the Council on the parental input and meetings as soon as those meetings are completed.

3. Dropout Rate

Scott Trimble

SCAAC Motion:

Focus on the dropout rate which was considered at the last Council meeting; specifically, the focus that dealt with how the dropout rate was a provision of school eligibility for rewards under the mandates of House Bill 53. Jon Frederick was asked to read the motion the Council had passed at its July 6th meeting. The motion was read. Bob Sexton expressed his desire to drop the original language at the end of his motion which read "the year 2000 and beyond." He moved that the words "and beyond" be stricken from the motion. His motion to amend was seconded by Linda Sheffield, and the motion to amend carried without opposition (refer to page 16 of the July 6th minutes for a full reading of the motion).

SCAAC Discussion/Questions:

Roger Pankratz raised issues of how to move the dropout rate to an even lower percentage than the 6% recommended in the previous Council recommendation. He asked if there had been a complete and thorough discussion of the issues. Anne Keene answered his inquiry in the affirmative, that, indeed, the Council had been diligent in discussing this issue.

Maynard Thomas asked if dropout rates had been part of the previous qualifications for reward school status. Scott Trimble answered that the dropout rate did figure into the index as a non-cognitive factor. He further elaborated that there had not been any absolute percentage attached to whether a school could qualify for rewards.

Gary Mielcarek suggested that there should be some "real" weight to the dropout factor in qualifying schools for rewards. In response, Maynard Thomas suggested that the causes and reasons for dropouts should be significant considerations in order for the problem of dropouts to be addressed.

Linda Sheffield inquired whether or not, or to what degree, dropout records are accurate across the state reporting system; is the data reliable and consistent? Discussion followed her question. Scott Trimble informed the Council that there were non-cognitive advisory committees which discussed these issues, and he added that the data is better now than ever before. He said that data collection is developing in a more efficient and consistent manner. Linda followed up Scott's comments with a question as to whether or not the current data were a reflection of this improved collection method? Some discussion followed on the data collected and its analysis. Linda noted her concern for the gravity of the dropout problem and home schooling issues as well. Scott commented that home schooled students are not counted as dropouts.

At this point, Brian Gong asked if Scott knew the number of home schooled students in Kentucky? Scott answered that while he could not cite the exact numbers, he did know that the numbers were rising. Brian then commented that this is an issue deserving further consideration by lawmakers, Kentucky Department of Education, Kentucky Board of Education, and other entities with interest in these issues.

4. Kentucky State Board Issues

Helen Mountjoy

Next, Anne Keene turned the Council's attention to the agenda for the day, specifically the accountability discussion and essential issues. She recognized Kentucky Board of Education chairperson Helen Mountjoy and requested she comment on issues past and future before the Council. Helen addressed the Council and made the following observations:

1. Commended the Council for the hard work it was accomplishing.
2. Noted that the Council's recommendations helped in moving Kentucky Board of Education forward in its work.
3. Noted that it is more difficult to deal with broad issues and Kentucky Board of Education needs to narrow the focus to the actual House Bill 53 mandates.
4. Noted that Kentucky Board of Education is prioritizing issues.
5. Noted that the discussion on models of accountability before Council was crucial for Kentucky Board of Education to move as quickly as possible given the time constraints faced.
6. Emphasized the makeup and weighting of various elements in the new accountability index model
7. Formally requested recommendations since Kentucky Board of Education will be considering these issues, especially a method to measure or gauge parental involvement in local schools; she noted that there were certain prohibitions to the degree it was practical for parents to be involved during the school day and that these factors all deserved consideration.
8. Noted that there are a certain number of statutory concerns that Kentucky Board of Education "must" deal with, for example—
 - a. Schools as units of accountability.
 - b. High standards be mandated and desirable.
 - c. The achievement of ALL students
9. Noted that Kentucky Board of Education members are also very concerned with the understandability of what-ever accountability model emerges from all the deliberations under way; the public & all stakeholders in public education must be able to understand the system clearly and cogently--this, she observed, had been a major problem in the past.

Chairperson Anne Keene thanked Helen for her attendance and comments.

5. High Standards Accountability Models

Scott Trimble

The council then reiterated the broad parameters of accountability: high standards, equity--accessibility to the resources of education; tools, facilities, technology; the operative philosophy that "all means all;" and continuous progress of schools over time.

Roger Pankratz re-emphasized the fact that the school is the unit or level of accountability even though there is some dispute on this point still being hotly contested around the state.

Anne Keene highlighted the eight requirements of the law as outlined in the day's agenda in item B, numbers 1-8. She emphasized that the Council would focus its work on what all schools must be responsible for--that is not to say that a higher level of expectation isn't possible at the local level; simply put, SCAAC must deal with state recommendations for ALL SCHOOLS.

At this point Anne Keene asked for an overview of the previous KIRIS model as it existed to ground the Council in the history of state-wide accountability.

Since this was a natural breaking point, she recessed the Council for a morning break at 10:15 a.m.

The Council reconvened and noted that Bonnie Lynch and Maxie Johnson were now present and that Gary Mielcarek would be absent for a period of time.

The chairperson recognized Brian Gong to review the KIRIS accountability model so that the Council could proceed with a full understanding of the past system. Brian highlighted some of the basic tenets of KERA as a preface to presentation of accountability models. Some of his points included:

1. High standards were the expectation.
2. Standards-based assessment was the basic design.
3. How much progress and by what date the standards were met had to be defined.
4. Progress reporting based on goals along with the rewards and sanction levels were defined.

Brian and Scott Trimble presented using handouts and overhead transparencies. One of Scott's handouts was a chart "Kentucky Assessment Program Accountability Cycle 2 (92-93, 95-96). Scott covered what was assessed, when it was assessed and what standards were within the four performance levels--Novice, Apprentice, Proficient and Distinguished.

Scott explained that the goal was to have students achieve at the proficient level. Over time the standards were refined by a large number of educators, parents, and stakeholders in the system. Scott elaborated on the past standards, how each was weighted, and how the index was calculated for individual schools.

SCAAC Comments/Questions:

Roger Pankratz asked for Scott to give more detail on the non-cognitive index. Scott provided the Council with an explanation of the non-cognitive factors, the weights of each factor and the overall weight of non-cognitive data on school indices. Discussion followed. In that discussion Roger Pankratz noted that he thought there was originally an intent to focus more on the non-cognitive elements than what actually was put into practice in the system.

Bob Sexton asked Scott if it would have been better for students under the old system to drop out rather than for them to attend and perform poorly on the KIRIS assessments? Scott said that while this was true that no one felt that was a desirable outcome.

The Council was given a chart "Figure 2: Accountability Decision Points" which became part of the of the discussion. Roger gave his interpretation that there was widespread misunderstanding about how the growth index was calculated; that it was not a two year determination but rather it was a four year process. There followed a discussion of the rewards and consequences of scoring below threshold levels under KIRIS. Essentially, the purpose of the system was to keep enough tension in the system for schools to keep moving progressively toward the 100 index or proficiency standard. Discussion followed. Maxie Johnson asked Scott Trimble for clarification on a specific report for her school and how gains were reflected on the Arts and Humanities assessment. Scott's answer was that in essence from 1991-1993 one item or one section of the assessment may have been valued in more than one way because multiple content areas may have been covered, and, since 1993 the way the test has been constructed. Discussion and clarification followed.

Chairperson Anne Keene emphasized that the charge to the Council was that whatever accountability model emerges that the model must be clear and more understandable to all persons—educators, parents, and the public.

Next, Brian Gong presented the Straight Line Accountability Model. The advantages of such a model included: there would be no need to know any history, just where a given school is from the baseline; there would be less up and down variation in the line on the graph. A Straight Line Accountability Model would basically have three bands: one line charting the schools goal, a second line which would indicate decline or progress, and a band which would show where any one school actually performed between the goal line and the decline levels. This model shows continuous progress or degree of decline. Roger Pankratz asked if there were any data of a school or schools which started at 20 and those that started at 40 which would show the difference in the degree of growth. Brian said that statewide data to date demonstrated that schools at low baseline indices

did not score better or worse than those which began at higher baseline indices in their expected growth.

Next, Roger Pankratz expressed his concern over equity issues in specific areas. Are there schools with higher socio-economic factors which are more likely to achieve their goals faster than those schools in low income areas? The opinion was expressed that schools at a 20 index level had a harder time reaching the 100 index goal, while schools at a 70 index had an easier time moving toward the 100 index goal.

The question was asked as to whether or not there should be some consideration to allow more time for the 20 index schools to reach the expected 100 index.

Maxie Johnson questioned the cases where schools with relative high achievement fall back a few points and the end up in some classification of decline or crisis—how does the Straight Line Model address this phenomenon? The answer to Maxie's questions was that the Straight Line Model would remedy some of the "ragged" or "spurty" growth and the consequences of it.

Bob Sexton voiced his opinion that there should be some emphasis on the resources schools would need to meet improvement goals.

The Chair recognized Kentucky Board of Education Chairperson Helen Mountjoy who voiced her opinion that the state cannot afford to keep expecting little or small gains or to have low expectations for schools. She continued by saying that no accountability model would be "carved in stone" and there would be ongoing revision and evaluation of the system.

6. Financial Equity Issues

Kyna Koch

Kyna Koch from the Division of Finance in the Kentucky Department of Education spoke briefly on financial equity issues. She explained that the current formula is based on needs, and those needs vary from district to district; equity issues must consider needs. At this point, Anne Keene discussed some of the research from other states which have addressed equity issues. Brian Gong posed the question of whether or not it is fair to ask schools to meet goals given their present circumstances, considering financial and all other resources. Brian noted that there is a wide range of resources beyond financial ones such as parental involvement.

Maynard Thomas asked if it was an equity issue in cases where certain districts incur expenses that exceed the norm, for example, transportation costs or technology costs? What is the state's responsibility in financing these needs?

Brian Gong suggested that the Council might need to ask the department for more information, and he asked if certain issues needed to be part of or included in accountability considerations. Chairperson Anne Keene agreed with Brian and

suggested that the Council would determine how much information would be needed before a recommendation can be made with full confidence. Brian Gong noted that all documents presented as DRAFT documents should not be disbursed until such documents become finalized.

Anne Keene recessed the Council for the lunch break at 12:32 p.m.

The Council reconvened at 1:30 p.m. Jon Frederick called the roll; nine members were present constituting a quorum.

SCAAC Business:

Anne Keene handed out some booklets from Education Commission of the States (ECS) and requested that all absent Council members receive copies.

Anne Keene recognized two Council members for their recent recognition for outstanding work from their professional organizations. Jon Akers and Maxie Johnson were applauded for these honors.

The Council needs to look at the necessity of generating a long term work plan schedule.

7. Threshold Accountability Model

Brian Gong

Threshold Model sets a point at which schools would not be considered in decline/crisis once that level would be attained; Brian used the example of an index of 80 being such a level.

The Council revisited the dropout rate issues. The question before the Council is what an acceptable level should be and then how dropout rate can play a part in accountability. Linda Sheffield suggested that the Council might consider a percentage of improvement in dropouts rather than an absolute rate beyond which schools would become ineligible for rewards. Anne Keene said that it was desirable to motivate kids to stay in school rather than just "making them stay in school."

Dr. Jerry Lunney from the Office of Education Accountability discussed the OEA's suggestions on accountability models. Dr. Lunney expressed Dr. Ken Henry's regrets that he could not be present at this meeting due to previous commitments. In his opening remarks, Dr. Lunney noted that KERA/KIRIS has suffered adversely from poor public understanding of the accountability components of reform. Dr. Lunney presented a draft document "OEA Accountability Ideas" which he used as part of his presentation.

The OEA plan distributes different values to the standard levels as follows:

Novice 0	Apprentice 1	Proficient 2	Distinguished 3
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In turn weights would be assigned to every component of assessment. Rewards and sanctions under this plan would be based on one biennium with two reward levels and three levels of sanctions.

Anne Keene asked Dr. Lunney if this proposed model would have the same wave-like or up and down movement which seemed problematic in the old KIRIS accountability design? She also asked how the present Request For Proposal would play out in handling this kind of model? Dr. Lunney said that if we tested every year, this kind of problem would not be as great a factor.

Roger Pankratz followed up with a question on the costs for testing every student every year and asked if that would not be prohibitive financially? He also asked if this model would not require an off the shelf test to be practical. Dr. Lunney's response was that the answer to Roger's question would depend on what an off the shelf test would contain.

Linda Sheffield expressed her concern over matching an off the shelf test with Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment. She also expressed her amazement at findings in a chart she had seen which showed a 0% correlation between poverty rate and progress but clarified that this was not a 0% correlation between poverty and achievement.

There was general discussion on the OEA model. Roger Pankratz asked if the present RFP would not need to be reissued or altered in some way if the OEA model became the model recommended and put into practice? Discussion followed.

Anne Keene commented that she had felt that the Council's stance currently was not to create a "testing culture" in the state; such a testing culture would test every student, every year with continuous data on each student's progress and achievement.

Brian Gong suggested that testing yearly would seem to mandate a statewide curriculum; there are various ways to report and use such testing data.

At this point, Chairperson Anne Keene asked if the Council had any further questions of Dr. Lunney regarding the OEA model.

It was agreed that there would be further communication from OEA through Brian Gong's office clarifying the OEA positions on accountability.

Roger Pankratz urged the Council to consider both what was "broken" about the system and what was "good" about the system; therefore, he would recommend keeping the good parts and fixing any "broken" parts.

The Chair recessed the Council for an afternoon break.

At 3:04 p.m. Chairperson Anne Keene reconvened The Council.

8. Governor's Approval of Council

Dr. Ed Ford

Dr. Ed Ford who spoke briefly to the Council and complimented them on the hard work accomplished and the difficult work ahead. He assured the Council that the Governor would do all he could to assist the Council in its work. Roger Pankratz asked Dr. Ford if there were any issues the Council needed to deal with, in particular issues that would solve old problems with KIRIS? Dr. Ford noted that there was the entire area of national comparison of Kentucky students with those around the country, but he felt that the Council was dealing with that issue.

Anne Keene characterized the work of the Council as a "learning process" in that there was so much the Council was researching and being advised about so their deliberations could be the best, most informed decisions for the good of Kentucky students.

Bob Sexton expressed his concern that eventually there would be a point at which the recommendations of the Council would need to interface somehow with entrance requirements of colleges and universities. In reply, Dr. Ford said that the administration was fully aware of these issues and would be supportive of all considerations. He acknowledged that Governor Patton was very interested in having each Kentucky high school graduate have more than a diploma indicating that the graduate had spent a certain amount of "seat time" required with or without the adequate level of academic success. Dr. Ford encouraged the Council to keep its excellent focus and the work ethic it had maintained since May 12th. He assured the Council that the Governor was monitoring and supporting the Council's work.

9. Highly Skilled Educators

**David Allen /
Bob Lumsden**

David Allen and Bob Lumsden proceeded to follow up on their previous presentations during the July 6th and 8th meetings on the Highly Skilled Educators Program. In his comments, Bob Lumsden addressed the Council concerning the recommendations matrix on Highly Skilled Educator's. Bob made the following points:

- Schools who do not make their improvement goals should be sanctioned in some significant manner to protect the students in that school;

- Furthermore, sanctions should be at the personal level if rewards cannot be at the personal level;
- Then rewards logically should go that way as well in reality, under the past system, "fear of sanctions" was initially the prime motivator not rewards;
- Early results at the district level show that elementary schools were keeping the districts out of decline.

Anne Keene observed that in some cases districts felt they were not in control of hiring, curriculum alignment and other factors and that this created conflicts and feelings of frustration, especially since School Based Decision Making Councils were making these decisions. She encouraged a balanced view of these issues. Bob Lumsden agreed with Anne's perspective on this point.

Bob Lumsden and David Allen handed out a matrix titled "Elements of the Consequences and Assistance Programs 2000-2002." They led the Council through the document. This particular document is separate from the previous voluntary assistance program recommendations matrix but is formatted in the same way as that 1998-2000 document.

David Allen emphasized that the primary element was on-site advisors, previously called Distinguished Educators, now to be called Highly Skilled Educators. The Highly Skilled Educators would model and assist in developing best classroom practices. The second element deals with fulltime certified staff; the recommendations focus more on evaluation of principals as capable leaders in evaluating certified staff and in assessing performance of School Based Decision Making Councils. Previously Distinguished Educators did work with SBDM's but without as much influence or authority as this current proposal.

As part of their recommendations, Bob and David recommend that evaluation and decision on principals should be binding as to the effectiveness at that level of leadership. Distinguished Educators have observed that evaluation and improvement plans were effective in structure and in result. Growth did not occur when support was not provided for such growth; support was and remains the key component. In regard to the student transfer issues, data was not always available as to exactly how many students requested transfer to a more successful school after classifications became public. In some cases there was a certain degree of history where families had some long-standing connection with the schools and did not wish the student to transfer from that district or school.

Anne Keene questioned when the Kentucky Board of Education would need recommendations on the Highly Skilled Educator's Program options. When would the Council have a recommendation? Bob Lumsden remarked that his office needed to know how the Highly Skilled Educator's Program will conduct business in November and then there could be a second piece on the post 2000 period; in other words, there could be two separate sets of recommendations.

Anne Keene clarified that the Council will format its response in a similar fashion to its previous recommendations on other issues.

At this time, Council member Sharon Solomon left the meeting due to a previous commitment and this resulted in only eight members being present; therefore, from this point on there was not a quorum present.

10. Subcommittee Process and Future Work

Anne Keene

The Council next discussed whether or not to work through some kind of subcommittee process. Bob Young questioned whether it would be difficult to get a subcommittee together in a timely fashion since the Council is now having problems with meeting dates that have a quorum present. Discussion followed.

Roger Pankratz reiterated his concern about the need for the Council to look more closely at Core Content for Assessment. There was no further discussion from the Council at this point.

The Council considered meeting dates and the tasks before them. Topics for further discussion included the following:

- Accountability
 - index, formula
 - expected growth parameters
 - consequences design
- Highly Skilled Educators Issues/Recommendations
- Scholastic Audit
- School Report Card
- Arts Performance Events, as specified in House Bill 53
- Student Level Accountability
- Appeals processes
- Validation Plan
- District Accountability
- Continuous Assessment
- Curriculum Alignment

A request was made that Loretta Russell send out a long-term calendar so Council members could circle dates on which they would be available; this should be a calendar which would reflect all dates until the end of the 1999 fiscal year.

There was further discussion of subcommittee or small focus groups. One question was whether Kentucky Department of Education staff members could work to facilitate

the subcommittee meetings? Various Council members expressed their desire to serve on particular subcommittees. Maynard Thomas asked whether this Council needed to name the assessment since there is growing concern that the name CATS not be associate with the assessments themselves. Discussion followed and the Council agreed that the assessments would need a name other than CATS which applied to the entire assessment and accountability program.

Bob Sexton passed out material on assessment and accountability from Susan Weston with the state school based decision making councils organization. Then Council members volunteered for subcommittee work with the understanding that absent member would be contacted and given the same opportunity. The following subcommittees were formed:

SCHOOL REPORT CARD COMMITTEE

Bob Sexton, Jamie Bowling, Sharon Solomon, Maynard Thomas, Maxie Johnson

STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

Jon Akers, Maxie Johnson, Bob Young, Bob Sexton, Maynard Thomas

SCHOLASTIC AUDIT COMMITTEE

Roger Pankratz, Chairperson, Bob Young

Each subcommittee will select a chairperson and report back to the full council. All Council members will be offered the chance to serve on one of the committees.

Adjournment

SCAAC Motion:

Chairperson called the meeting of the School Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability Council into recess until its meeting on July 30th at 9:00 a.m. in the State Board Room.